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United States Department of State



Washington, D.C. 20520

August 2, 1995

AMSC

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MEMORANDUM

TO: G - Timothy E. Wirth

THROUGH: AF - George E. Moose

FROM: Rwanda/Burundi Coordinator - R.W. Bogosian

SUBJECT: Rwanda/Burundi Priorities

8/2/95

Over the near term, five sets of activities or priority issues will dominate my agenda as Rwanda/Burundi Coordinator. They are:

- A Regional Conference
- Human Rights/Administration of Justice
- Refugees
- Support of Government of Rwanda/Burundi Centrists
- Emergency Planning

The following is an annotated outline of some of the most important or delicate aspects of each set of issues and actions:

REGIONAL CONFERENCE: There is a fairly broad consensus that the time is ripe for a comprehensive regional conference. We will provide our views on how best to organize and prepare for such a conference in a separate memorandum. Over the near term, we will consult closely with several important constituencies, viz., the UN and OAU; key European governments including, perhaps, the Vatican; Rwanda and Burundi neighbors, which could touch on sensitive bilateral issues, notably with Zaire; and with the Hill, the NGOs and the press. In addition to basic political issues, many of the specific points noted below would have to be considered at the Regional Conference or follow-on meetings.

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HUMAN RIGHTS/ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE: Past or present human rights abuses are central concerns for us in both Rwanda and Burundi. In both countries it is essential to make progress in improving very weak, virtually moribund, systems of justice. It seems that at last we are making progress with the Rwanda tribunal and the Burundi Commission of Inquiry, but much more remains to be done. In addition, prison overcrowding in Rwanda, administration of justice legislation, the issue of foreign magistrates and related issues all require priority attention if there is to be progress on the human rights front and if we are to succeed in encouraging repatriation of refugees. Tactically, we have opportunities to exert leverage as we support Rwanda's request to have the arms embargo lifted.

REFUGEES: The whole range of refugee issues will continue to require urgent attention, including issues arising out of the actual return of refugees such as reconciliation at the local level. Current concerns include the presence of arms among Rwandan refugees in Zaire. There are logistical problems related to managing the refugee camps and moving them. We are also concerned about the possibility of fresh refugee movements out of Burundi and the possible closure of Tanzania's border with Burundi.

SUPPORT FOR THE GOR AND BURUNDI CENTRISTS: This is a shorthand way of referring to the several efforts underway to shore-up moderates in both countries. As you know, there are several AID, USIS and IMET programs already being implemented and others being requested and/or considered. In addition, there is the UNDP Roundtable process where disbursements have been very disappointing, especially compared to pledges. ~~SRSB Abdallah informally has proposed having a UNDP Roundtable for Burundi. One aspect of this set of issues is the military element. We need to consider what military assistance, if any, we or our allies should consider providing either country. We are talking of lifting the arms embargo on Rwanda while looking into whether one should be imposed on Burundi. Related to the need to improve the administration of justice is the need to professionalize local police capabilities. What role, if any, should the U.S. play in this regard?~~

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EMERGENCY PLANNING: Even as we plan specific programs with their staffing implications, we have to plan for contingencies. These include OFDA-type planning for sudden, massive refugee flows. Such thorny problems as being able to provide adequate water remain to be resolved. We also have continually to review the safety of Americans in Rwanda and Burundi. The latter situation, should it deteriorate precipitously, may require an emergency evacuation or further reduction in staff at the Embassy in Bujumbura. As long as the security situation in Burundi remains potentially hazardous, we will have to review other normally routine staffing and management issues through the security filter.

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